

Technical Bulletin #93:

Harvest and Postharvest Recommendations for Chinese Kale

1. Harvest

- Chinese kale can be harvested 60 to 75 days after planting. It depends on the variety and time of the year.
- Harvesting should be done during dry times of the day between 9 am in the morning and 3 pm in the afternoon. Try to harvest when the temperatures are not too high.
- Chinese kale is harvested when it is full size, but still young. It should be harvest when the main stem starts shooting flowers or when the leaves start becoming powdery.
- Over-mature kale has rough leaves and a bitter taste.
- Pull the plant out completely and then cut the edible part with a sharp knife.
- Avoid exposing the plant to direct sunlight which causes the leaves to droop.
- Avoid laying the plant directly on the ground which causes easy decay from soil microorganisms.
- Avoid harvesting after raining because it will result in a fungal infestation.



Chinese kale after trimming the base

2. Cleaning

- Rinse the leaves with potable water.
- Cut the rot and over mature leaves and trim the base evenly.
- Air dry the leaves for 20 to 30 minutes.

3. Sorting

- Sort leaves into three categories based on leaf and stem size. Higher quality leaves can receive higher prices.
- Arrange the leaves in rows in baskets no more than 40 cm tall.
- Avoid stacking leaves too high up.

4. Packing for transport

- Once the leaves are well stacked in the baskets, avoid damage by stacking the baskets and leaving space for air ventilation in order to protect the leaves from deterioration.
- If using bamboo baskets use liners or cushion to wrap the Chinese kale.
- To avoid leaf breakage and bruising do not over stack the leaves. Bruising and breaking lead to deterioration.

5. Transport to the market

- The vehicle used for transporting the leaves to the market should have refrigeration to reduce the transpiration. At the very least the vehicle should have a roof to protect produce from direct sunlight, dirt and dust.
- If the baskets used are not designed to be staked one on top of the other, use shelves between the layers of baskets to stack the baskets.

6. Storage

- Harvest the kale when the weather is dry and cool.
- Store the leaves in the shade.
- Use a wet cloth to wrap the stems, not the leaves.
- Keep the cloth moist all the time. This will allow for up to three days of storing without damage.
- The maximum storage life for Chinese kale is 10 to 14 days when it is stored at 0°C and 95 to 100% humidity.



Proper stacking for transport

7. Nutritional value

As a general rule, the darker the Chinese kale, the more nutrients it provides. “Loose head” or loose leaf Chinese kale has higher nutritional value than “crisp head” kale. A serving of loose leaf Chinese kale, 100g for an adult and 50g for a child, provides two to three times the daily amount of Vitamin A. This is important because in Cambodia, Vitamin A deficiency is a major cause of night blindness in children.

Cambodia HARVEST

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